

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The January 8, 2009 Final Office Action and the reference cited therein have been carefully reviewed. In view of the following remarks, the favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

I. Claim Rejections -- 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 1 and 5-14 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 5-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ilea et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,192,066; hereinafter "Ilea") in view of Weis (U.S. Patent No. 4,930,061). This basis for rejection is respectfully traversed.

Presently pending claim 1 recites that "the dome/cone seat (44) is produced by plastic extrusion coating (54) applied using the Outsert method to *cause said through opening (43) to anchor and precisely position the dome/cone seat (44)*".

As described at paragraph [0016] of the specification, the Outsert process involves the spraying of plastic material directly around the parts to be enclosed and the edges, openings or projections on the metal serve as an anchor or projection for the plastic. This avoids the costly and complicated assembly of extruded parts. In this manner, the Outsert method allows the production of very precise shapes with very low tolerances.

Thus, in the present invention, the dome/cone seat (44) is being precisely anchored and positioned, with a very low tolerance for error in the resulting configuration of the dome/cone seat (44) and the co-operating conical dome (35), via the resulting structure due to the Outsert method. Although the Examiner states that the present

limitations constitute product by process limitations, Applicant respectfully submits that the resulting structure, presently achievable through application of the Outsert method but not achievable through other commonly known methods in the art, differs significantly and critically from the structures disclosed or suggested by any of the cited references.

The use of the Outsert method provides an improved motor vehicle lock that avoids the generation of noise problems existing in the prior art. As recited in claim 1, the use of the Outsert method to “precisely position the dome/cone seat (44)” on the carrier plate (4) allows the dome/cone seat (44) to accurately and easily align with the co-operating conical dome (35). As shown in FIGS. 5-10, the precise co-operation of the funnel-shaped opening (45) within the dome/cone seat (44) with the conical dome (35) during assembly of the door lock, ensures that the conical dome (35) is reliably arranged in its desired final position, *to a degree of positioning accuracy not currently achievable with the structures disclosed in the cited references*. As recited in claim 5, a bolt (71) may then be inserted through opening (43) into a bearing (37) of the counter piece (34) (the conical dome (35)).

This configuration also provides advantages over the prior art such as 1) avoiding a noise transmission bridge between the motor vehicle door lock and the carrier plate, and 2) greatly improved production efficiencies due to the use of the Outsert method, a single-step production method allows the accurate production of many surfaces and form, without requiring any assembly of extruded parts.

Furthermore, through the Outsert method the external edges (46) of the carrier plate (4) or the edges of openings/cut out areas in the carrier plate (4) may be enclosed by

a plastic extrusion coating (55), as recited in claim 9. Such coating avoids the need for labor-intensive deburring and protects against corrosion, etc.

Another advantageous features of the present invention, as recited in claims 10 and 11, is that the Outsert method may be used to efficiently apply noise muffling layers of plastic (5, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55) to various parts of the motor vehicle lock assembly, in conjunction with forming the dome/cone (44), etc. *Such structures and associated advantages, as a whole, would not be provided via using the other methods of production commonly known in the art for these devices.*

Both Ilea and Weis disclose connecting elements, as the Examiner states. However, none of the cited references disclose or suggest producing the above-described parts through the Outsert method, to arrange such parts in a structure so precisely and accurately via anchoring them at the edges/openings/projections of the metal carrier. As described above, such precise positioning and arrangement are critical to the many advantages of the present invention.

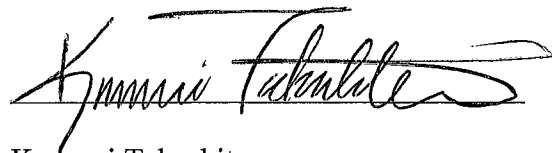
Thus, for all of the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references do not disclose or suggest essential features of the present invention. Accordingly, Applicant believes that independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over any combination of the cited references. Claims 5-14 ultimately depend from and include all of the subject matter of claim 1, which has been shown to be allowable. Thus, claims 5-14 are also allowable over the cited references.

II. Summary

Having fully addressed the Examiner's rejection of all of the presently pending claims 1 and 5-14, Applicant submits that the reasons for the Examiner's rejections have been overcome. Applicant respectfully requests that the amendments be entered and a Notice of Allowance be issued.

If the Examiner believes the prosecution of this application would be advanced by a telephone call, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's attorney at the telephone indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Konomi Takeshita', with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

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